



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Aug. 26, 2004

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MEDIA ADVISORY

State Health Department Reports 556 Cases of Whooping Cough (News Release Follows Below)

BISMARCK, N.D. – To discuss revised testing criteria and procedures and to answer media questions about whooping cough (pertussis) activity in the state, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a telephone media availability Thursday, Aug. 26, 2004, at 3 p.m. The following department officials will participate in the 3 p.m. conference call:

- Dr. Craig Lambrecht, state medical officer
- Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist
- Bonna Cunningham, Division of Microbiology director
- Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager
- Molly Sander, Immunization Surveillance coordinator

To connect to the conference call, the media is asked to follow these steps:

- 1) Dial 866.262.1846.
- 2) Once you are connected, enter *3282378*. (Please note: The star key must be pressed before and after the pin number.)
- 3) If you have trouble connecting, call the help desk at 800.263.3863 option 2.

Members of the media who wish to attend in person can meet at 3 p.m. in the AV Room 210 located on the second floor of the Judicial Wing in the State Capitol Building, Bismarck, N.D.

Weekly conference calls with the media will be held as warrants. For more information about the conference call, contact Loreeta Leer Frank at 701.328.1665.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

State Health Department Reports 556 Cases of Whooping Cough

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced that 556 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) have been reported in the state. This number reflects cases identified since June 22, 2004.

The following is a breakdown by county of whooping cough cases reported to the department:

Adams – 1	McKenzie – 1	Sargent – 4
Barnes – 3	McLean – 21	Stark – 7
Benson – 19	Mercer – 17	Stutsman – 4
Bowman – 1	Morton – 6	Towner – 1
Burleigh – 60	Mountrail – 7	Traill – 1
Cass – 40	Pierce – 6	Walsh – 1
Divide – 2	Ramsey – 1	Ward – 264
Dunn – 1	Ransom – 3	Wells – 11
Grand Forks – 35	Renville – 1	Williams – 8
McHenry – 15	Richland – 1	
McIntosh – 2	Rolette – 12	

Throughout the current whooping cough outbreak, the Department of Health has consulted regularly with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on its ongoing analysis of outbreaks in other states that use the same whooping cough test, the CDC has suggested that the department's Public Health Laboratory refine its testing procedures. These changes will likely result in fewer positive tests being reported.

The number of specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory has nearly surpassed the laboratory's testing capacity. To help stop the spread of the disease to people who are most vulnerable, the department is prioritizing specimens for testing. Specimens from the following groups will be tested first: health-care workers, staff or children in day care, and people who have specific symptoms of whooping cough. Results for these high-priority patients should be available 48 hours after the laboratory receives the specimens.

Because of the high volume of testing, specimens that do not meet the priority criteria may be sent to an alternative laboratory for testing, resulting in a possible delay in receiving results.

Currently, the Department of Health is able to provide whooping cough testing at no charge. In the future, however, funds may not be available to accommodate the high volume of testing, and a charge may have to be considered.

Updated whooping cough numbers are posted by noon Monday through Friday on the North Dakota Department of Health's Disease Control website at www.health.state.nd.us/disease. For more information about whooping cough, the public can call 800.472.2180 or a local public health unit.

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Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

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